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EDUCATION AND SOCIAL CONTROL

By H. W. CHASE
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The historian of the future who sets down the achievements of the era which ended with the outbreak of the world war will, in all likelihood, speak of it in terms of a great success and a great failure. Its great achievement was its success in its attempts to understand and to control nature. Its failure was its disregard of the necessity of understanding and intelligently controlling human nature.

Until quite modern times, man's attitude toward nature was shaped by tradition and superstition. The astrologer studied the stars not in search of what we have come to call "scientific" facts about them, but to determine their magical influences on human life. The alchemist toiled in his laboratory to discover the philosopher's stone that tradition held must exist, and sought to influence the reactions of his chemicals by charms and incantations. Tradition held that the earth was flat, the center of a solar system consisting of the sun, moon, and seven planets. Galileo, who doubted such traditions because he found facts that did not agree with them, was haled before the Inquisition and obliged to recant. Newton's formulation of the law of gravitation was held to be "irreligious" because it contradicted the traditional idea of why objects fell to the ground.

Slowly man's views of nature have undergone a radical change. He has come to see that understanding and control of natural forces come only to him who prefers fact to tradition, observation and experiment to prejudice and superstition, open-mindedness to authority. The scientific attitude toward nature has prevailed, not because man naturally tends to think about natural phenomena in scientific terms—he emphatically does not—but because it "works"; it does give increased understanding and control.

Modern civilization owes its structure to the victory of the scientific attitude toward material things, and to the increased control over nature which has been the result of its victory. This is very obvious in all that pertains to industry. Our modern business life could not exist for a moment were it not for modern science. Physics and chemistry are its foundation-stones. Subtract one achievement of science—the control of the electric current—and imagine modern industry in a world devoid of motors, telegraphs, wireless, telephones, dynamos, automobiles, electric lights, and all the myriad other uses of electricity. The great discoveries and inventions that have created the modern industrial world have not, to be sure, always been the

work of men who were highly trained in science, but they have invariably been the result of that characteristically modern scientific frame of mind which seeks to control nature by finding out facts about nature, not by relying on tradition and authority.

Now, because science has directly transformed industry, it has altered human life in all its aspects. The growth of factories which machinery made possible built up in turn great cities, created a child labor problem, set labor and capital over against each other in enmity. The scramble for distant markets which better means of production and transportation brought about created a host of new political and diplomatic problems—was, in the opinion of some, the most potent underlying cause of the Great War. Automobile and telephone, railway and trolley, have transformed rural life. The invention of the moving picture has altered the habits of recreation of most of the civilized world. The modern newspaper has made public opinion a living force in a nation of a hundred million people. Commodities and ideas come to our villages from the ends of the earth, and their own products are sold in markets which their makers never saw, and their prices determined by men of whose very existence they are ignorant.

But the picture has its black side. Science has not only created the industries of peace, it has made modern warfare what it is. It has given us the factory, and with it the operative whose daily task is a soul-deadening drudgery. It has made possible great corporations, but deep social unrest has come in their train. A constantly growing social and political unrest was indeed, for a generation before the outbreak of the war, apparent in all civilized countries. The sense that something was fundamentally wrong was growing on thoughtful men. A deep and increasing restlessness manifested itself everywhere. Is there then something malevolent about material progress? Has modern science created a civilization which is doomed to destroy itself with the weapons which it has created?

As a result of increased natural control, man's spiritual and material environment has transformed itself almost within a generation. Life—it is a truism to say it—is far more complex than ever before. In every field new problems have arisen, new adjustments have had to be made. Human nature has been obliged to work with new materials; with new ideas, new theories of life, new standards of living, new problems in

the relating of the individual to his fellows. Man has been fumbling and stumbling about in an unfamiliar world, in a society that differs more from that of his grandfather's time than that grandfather's did from the life of Abraham. What more natural than that the human spirit should have felt itself bewildered, dissatisfied, that it should have sought blindly for satisfaction in a flood of new doctrines and "isms," and in the catchy, showy remedies of demagogues? We have become conscious that the beliefs, the simple standards of conduct, the theories of education, of citizenship and of social justice of our ancestors, somehow do not work as they ought, are insufficient to interpret, guide, and control our modern spirit.

Society has been transformed by science and the industrial revolution, but social and political problems seem more insuperable, less understandable, than ever. We realize, most of us, that present methods of education are quite inadequate, that much of our political machinery is not running smoothly, but we seem capable of little progress in bettering such things. We neither understand the social forces that are at work about us nor are we capable of controlling them. The ghastly catastrophe which threatens to wreck civilization is evidence enough of both these facts. Who understands the fundamental underlying causes of the world war? To the economist, they lie in economic rivalries, to the philosopher, in the clash of rival systems of thought, to the anthropologist, in racial differences—psychologist, geographer, diplomat, all have their varied explanations of why the great war came, and at the end we can only confess our ignorance. Had men understood, and had they been able to control in some measure, the new and complex social forces that the last century has brought into being, the calamity might well have been averted. Whatever else it is, the war is witness that modern civilization has created forces which threaten its destruction unless they can be comprehended and directed into safe channels.

Now the means by which man attempts to control society are the established political and social institutions; schools, churches, courts of justice, legislative bodies, and the like. These bear the same relation to human nature that the machine bears to nature; that is, they are devices for controlling human forces, as machines are devices for controlling natural forces. Legislative bodies control men by making laws and prescribing penalties, schools by imparting knowledge and forming character. But there is this fundamental difference between the machine and the institution; the machine is built along lines suggested by observation and experiment, the institution owes its structure to tradition and authority. That is, the stand-

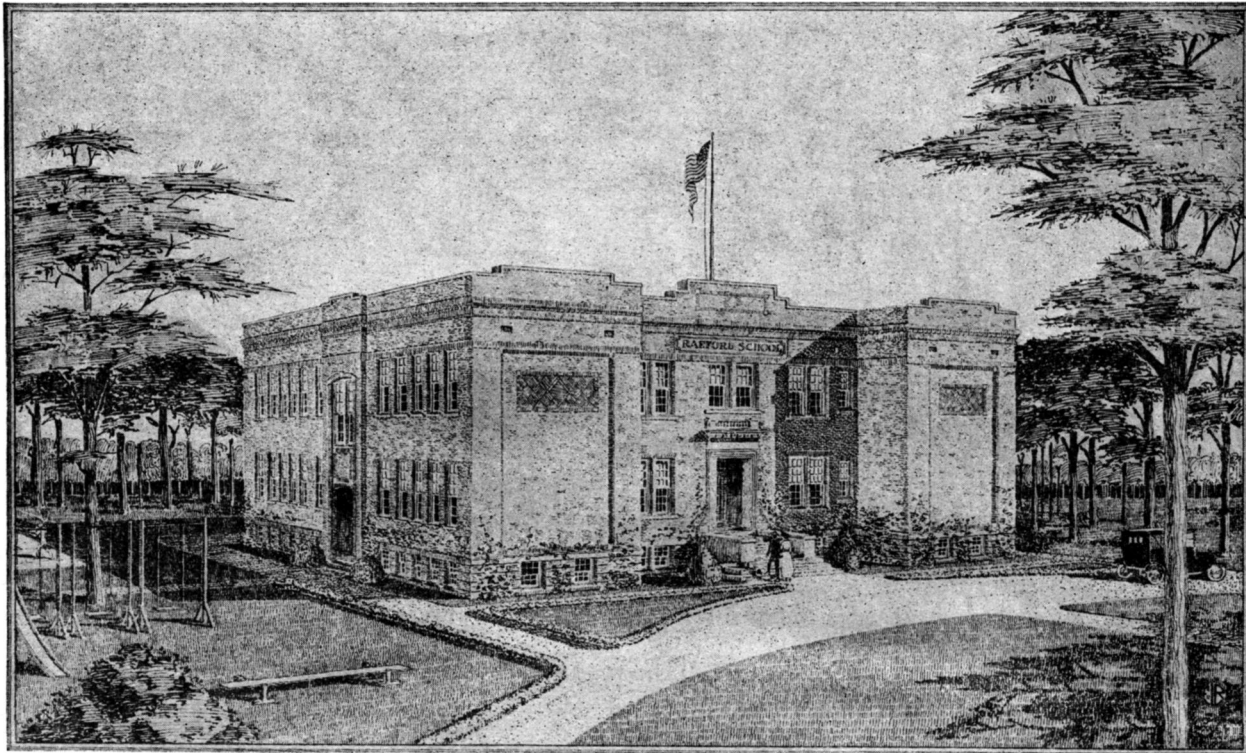
point which still determines the structure of the institution is precisely that which used to determine man's attitude toward nature—that of tradition and superstition. The institution is failing to control man's behavior because it has not learned to think about human forces as science has learned to think about nature. In a simpler society, institutions built on tradition and preserved by its force succeeded fairly well, just as very incorrect theories about nature worked fairly well. But as society has become more complex, the inadequacy of the traditional social and political devices has become more obvious, just as with the advance of science the inadequacy of the older views of nature has become more obvious. Incorrect theories may work for a time, but there comes a point beyond which they will not carry. That point, as it regards our established institutions, modern civilization seems to have reached. If we are to continue to put reverence for the ancestral ways of doing things above the attempt to understand the meaning of life as it goes on in the twentieth century, and above the honest determination to strive to control life through our intelligent understanding of it, we will win this war only to find our last state worse than our first.

The helplessness of the Russian peasant before the complex problems he must face is complete enough, but his lack of understanding is no greater than that of the man who believes that schools or legislatures can cope with conditions in 1920 by repeating the formulas they were using in 1914. When Germany is beaten the millenium will not be at hand. Safe conditions under which to carry out the great experiment of popular government will have been secured, but the success of the experiment itself is not yet secure. It will not be secure unless we shall come in some degree to view social phenomena as we view nature—with eyes not blinded by prejudice and passion, or clouded by tradition and custom.

The very foundation-stone of popular government is the school. If it fails—as it has too largely failed—to fit boys and girls for intelligent and sympathetic co-operation in our common life, the future of democracy is dark. It must steadfastly re-examine the bases of its procedure, strive to understand its task, refine its ideals and study the methods of their attainment. This is no time for continuing educational methods and ideals simply because our fathers thought them good.

(TO BE CONTINUED)

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RAEFORD'S NEW SCHOOL BUILDING. ONE OF THE TWO STATE HIGH SCHOOLS OF HOKE COUNTY

The following description of the new Raeford school building has been furnished THE JOURNAL by Mr. Henry E. Bonitz, of Wilmington, the architect who designed it and supervised its construction:

"This building is located in a 10-acre grove of virgin long leaf pines, to my mind, the prettiest school site in North Carolina, and I have seen quite a number of our public school buildings. This building is now near completion. The school board has gone the limit in making this the most ideal, the most up-to-date modern school building that has been erected in North Carolina. I say this without fear of being contradicted, and I am willing to leave it to you to be the judge. We hope to have you to visit this building as soon as it is completed for you to pass judgment on the same.

"There are eleven class rooms on the main and second floors, there are four large classrooms in the basement that are to be used for Domestic Science and Manual Training. The assembly hall is on the first floor, has seven exits, making it impossible to have a panic in this building. The assembly hall has a seating capacity of 600 and is seated with approved assembly hall chairs. The stage is large and provided with dressing rooms which are also used as practice music rooms.

"There are two play rooms in the basement, the most sanitary arrangement for toilets that can be se-

cured. The sanitary fountains are in evidence on all floors. There are also two retiring rooms for indisposed pupils, a library, superintendent's office, and teachers' retiring room, spacious hall, well lighted wall spaces for the proper display of pictures and historical relics. The classrooms are well lighted, properly ventilated and the building heated with four large Moncrief Warm Air Furnaces.

"The School Board is composed of J. W. McLaughlin, chairman; J. W. Moore, secretary, B. R. Gatlin, W. T. Covington, treasurer, and Dr. H. R. Cromartie.

"The contractor, Mr. Geo. W. Cox, of Raeford, is giving us a most ideal job. Prof. J. T. Jerome is superintendent of the school.

"The school board has recently directed me to have a land-scape gardener to lay out the grounds in accordance with plans which I have prepared, making this grove a beauty spot of the State."—H. E. BONITZ.

DEATH OF HON. JOHN C. SCARBOROUGH

The death of Hon. John C. Scarborough, former State Superintendent of Public Instruction, which occurred at his home in Murfreesboro on December 26th, removes one of North Carolina's consecrated educational workers. An appreciation of Mr. Scarborough's life and services will appear in the next issue of THE JOURNAL.